

Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe

Commissioner & Adjutant General

www.DMVA.Alaska.Gov



Alaska National Guard

*Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs*

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

#MvaWeb

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21-022

March 18, 2021

By Victoria Granado

Joint Force Headquarters

Sweetface “Nyx” Shelton, a beloved Alaska National Guard therapy dog, awarded Alaska Commendation Medal

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska— Sweetface Shelton, a brindle-furred American Mastiff, is a well-loved and valued therapy dog in the Alaska National Guard. Affectionately known as “Nyx,” she implements therapeutic aid for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program, as well as Warrior and Family Services. Nyx and her owner, Ashley, have devoted over three years to providing emotional support to all Guardsmen, from a victim of sexual assault testifying in court, to personnel handling everyday stressors.

Octavia Thompson, the State Family Program Director and one of Nyx’s coworkers, says she witnesses the benefits of having Nyx available for service members experiencing hardship, stress or just needing a comforting moment every time Nyx is in the office.

“Without a doubt, her calm and comforting nature has had positive impact on our program,” said Thompson. “We know that sometimes we have to discuss things that are uncomfortable or very personal, but as soon as people see her, they feel as if a friend is there.”

Thompson said Nyx provides unconditional love without judgment, something that can make all the difference to anyone needing it.

“I have seen her on multiple occasions just sit next to someone who has had a bad day, lean against their legs to let them know they are not alone,” said Thompson. “I, too, have experienced her support on a rough day where she has come to sit next to me, put her paw on my leg and look to me as if to say ‘I am here with you.’”

Throughout her years serving in the Guard, Nyx has maintained constant readiness to serve her comrades. A stabilizing and caring presence, she empowers service members and directly contributes to a culture of seeking and receiving help when needed.

###

- more -

PHOTOS

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a small selection of low-resolution photos for viewing on screen.
2. **DVIDS link** includes selected full-resolution photos. (Accessible from military computers.)
<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/391790/sweetface-nyx-shelton-beloved-alaska-national-guard-therapy-dog-awarded-alaska-commendation-medal>



Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, left, awards Sweetface "Nyx" Shelton, a therapy dog, and her owner, Ashley Shelton, with the Alaska Commendation Medal, Mar. 18, 2021 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Nyx provides provides emotional support to service members as part of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program and Warrior and Family Services. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Victoria Granado)



Sweetface "Nyx" Shelton, a therapy dog, attends an Alaska National Guard meeting after being awarded the Alaska Commendation Medal, Mar. 18, 2021 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Nyx provides provides emotional support to service members as part of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program and Warrior and Family Services. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Victoria Granado)



Sweetface "Nyx" Shelton, a therapy dog, attends an Alaska National Guard meeting after being awarded the Alaska Commendation Medal, Mar. 18, 2021 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Nyx provides emotional support to service members as part of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program and Warrior and Family Services. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Victoria Granado)